

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08235753 8

GRACIE
AND
HER PETS
HUNTER



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

RET 7 1009

★ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY



Handwritten
N/A

10/13.09
G-12

GRACIE AND HER PETS

BY
MARGARET L. HUNTER



COCHRANE PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK

1909
M. L. H.



1916

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—My Little Mistress and I.....	5
II.—Cropy	17
III.—Robbie's Ranch Rambles.....	46
IV.—White Muffie and Her Kittens.....	60
V.—Poor Peekaboo.....	65
VI.—Little Tiddledewinks.....	70
VII. They Laugh Best Who Laugh Last.....	73
VIII.—The Black Hen's Story.....	76
IX.—The Legend of the Cherry.....	78

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER I.

MY LITTLE MISTRESS AND I.

COME, Nero, my little son,
A tale to you I'll tell;
Of my mistress and her pets,
And of myself as well.

I love my little mistress,
To me she's very kind,
Sometimes I think she is rough;
I s'pose that's in the mind.

The first that I will speak of,
Is Quitter and her chicks;
The next of importance
Is Tabbie and her kits.

Now, Nero, sit down on the grass at my feet. How like a boy you are, stretching your full length and laying your head upon your arms. Well, I shall sit up, so I can hear if my mistress calls me; for to-day is her birthday, eight years old.

It won't be long till she will be what the gentlefolks call a young lady. I am not half her age, so I s'pose it will be a long while before I shall be called a young lady.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

Yes, it makes me sad ; for when she is a young lady, she won't want to romp and play with me, and catch bumble bees on the sweet white clover in the front yard.

Oh ! such fun as we have. The other day her mamma called out, "Gracie, are you not ashamed to have poor Topsy catching bees, they might sting her"; also, "It is wicked to harm the bees ; they are such faithful workers. Can't you find some better amusement?"

Gracie patted me on the head and whispered, "We don't care, do we Top? They won't sting us, will they?" I looked up in her face, and it was on the end of my tongue to tell her that the first, and only one I had caught stung me in the mouth, and how I did spin around the yard. Gracie just laughed, and clapped her hands ; she thought I was having lots of fun.

Well ! I did not tell her ; I thought it would spoil her fun. (Although I thought she ought not to disobey her mamma, for she is always willing that we have plenty of harmless fun, even to letting Gracie run in the front yard without her shoes and stockings.)

Just then Gracie said she saw a beauty of a bee, and away we ran, she with her hat off ready to put over the bee.

She had it raised and made a step forward, when she dropped the hat (but not on the bee) and cried out, "Oh ! Top, I believe I am snake bit," but I looked around and could see no snake, so she went limping to the house to tell her mamma.

She wasn't gone long, but came back smiling, her foot tied up, and said it hurt pretty badly until her mamma put some baking soda on the sting, and told her a bee had stung her.

So you see, Nero, children get punished in some way

GRACIE AND HER PETS

or other for disobedience. Gracie got stung by a bee, and the ones she caught in her hat left honey in it, or something, for she cried when her mamma combed her hair. My! I am glad I haven't long golden hair like my mistress; she says I have red hair, with white.

She puts her arms around my neck and says, "I love you, Top, you're so pretty."

Well, her mamma thought she would read a story about bees; so one afternoon she and Gracie sat out there in the bower, where you see the wild grape-vine climbing and the roses on each side of the seat.

She read about the queen bee, being larger than the workers, and that she lays as many as twelve thousand eggs in the lapse of twenty-four days. The office of the queen bee is to lay eggs, that of the workers to collect the honey from the cells and feed the young bees. Well, there was much more about the bees. You see, I was lying at their feet, and heard all about them.

Gracie remembered about the bees, too, for the next afternoon she said, "Let's look at the bees sucking the honey from the clover." We watched them for some time; then she cried out, "Oh! Top, I believe I have the queen bee out of mamma's hive."

I ran to see what she had found. I think she surely had found the queen of bees, a large brown bee with yellow stripes around its body, the largest I ever saw. It was so clumsy it could hardly fly. Gracie cried, "Keep back, Top; don't touch it, you might break her eggs. Wouldn't it be awful to break so many eggs. Watch me, I am going to catch her and put her back in the hive; my, she is a beauty."

She carried her and tried to poke her in through the small space where the workers came out and went in, but

GRACIE AND HER PETS

there wasn't room, and before we could think what to do next, out came the little workers and they turned her over and over, and you never heard such buzzing in your life. Gracie was scared about her and said, "I must get her and take her to mamma." And so she did, and her mamma and papa just laughed and laughed about Gracie's queen bee. I guess it was just a common bumble bee, after all.

With all of Gracie's willful ways she loves her mamma dearly, and tries to help her.

We water the chickens. I tell you we can haul quite a load in her little wagon. She puts my harness on me, hitches me to the little wagon, fills the wagon by setting in it a bucket of water ; then away we go on a dog trot.

But sometimes, before we reach the trough, she will spy her old hen, Quitter, and her chickens, and away she runs, leaving me standing hitched to the wagon. Sometimes she will return with her chickens in her lap, with quiet old Quitter cluck-clucking behind her. At other times she will forget all about me for a long while.

I lie down and wait for her, but she never knows how badly I feel to think she treats me so. I cannot soon forget it.

Yet Gracie thinks if she pats me a little and tells me she is sorry, that I will forget all neglect. She says she is very sorry, and, of course, she is sure that I understand all she tells me. She is quite a dogmatist about that. That is a pretty hard word for you to understand, Nero ; but you see I have been going to school this spring and last year with Gracie, and have learned a great deal.

Well, dogmatize means to assert positively with proof, and that is what she does when anyone tells her that Topsy cannot understand all that she is talking about.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

She will say: "Now, see if she don't—Topsy, look me in the face," and I look up and smile. Then she will say: "Shake hands with me, Topsy." I give her my right hand. Then she puts her arms around my neck and says: "I think she is a very sensitive dog." I think she means sensible.

And her papa and mamma laugh on the sly when she makes these mistakes, for my mistress tries to use big words.

Sometimes when the family go to visit your master and mistress they allow me to go along and, for fear I get tired walking the mile, Gracie tells me to get into the carriage by her.

I lie down at her feet, for I do enjoy a ride. One time Gracie said: "See, mamma! Topsy lies down as discontented"—but she meant unconcerned, I think, for her mamma said: "She does look unconcerned." It's funny to hear some folks talk; they think we poor dogs understand as little of what they are talking about as a deaf coachman, and, let me tell you, Nero, you must be a better boy or you will be sent away from a good home and a kind master and mistress.

Gracie told me that her Cousin Isa said at times you were a nuisance, eating her flowers, running after her chickens and digging up her tree of heaven. You need not look so doggedly, for it is very true, and you must be a good boy. It is said every dog has its day, and I think you have had your puppyhood days and should learn to be useful now.

Tell you about Tabby and her kittens, did you say? Yes, that kind of talk pleases you best, and I did not invite you here to preach a sermon to you and I won't;

GRACIE AND HER PETS

but, Nero, you are dear to me, so take my advice and be good.

Now I'll tell you about Tabby and her kittens and my schooldays and (as Gracie says) sing the dog's-ology; that is what she does when we play school.

Tabby is a very good cat and has two pretty kittens, one a black and yellow, like herself; the other a Maltese. We have great fun together, or at least Gracie and I enjoy the fun and the kittens make as much noise as we do. We get them in one corner of the yard and then Gracie says: "Let's get them, Topsy." Then they make lamp brushes of their tails and spit and mew, just as if we would hurt them; but we don't. Gracie pets them, but if I try to lick their faces they spit at me and jump like hop-frogs, which is very ill-mannered.

She dresses them up in her dolls' dresses and rides them around in her dolls' buggy, and they look like little negro babies.

Yes, I am proud of my schooldays; few dogs attend school as long as I have. I should never have gone, but I heard Gracie say to her mamma the first day of school: "Mamma, may I take Topsy to school with me? She will keep the snakes and coyotes away." And I knew how often I had been kept awake at night by the coyotes, howling around the chicken house, trying to take the turkeys that roosted on the fence nearby.

I have barked and barked many a night for hours, and many a time have the coyotes run me inside the yard, and sometimes there would be too many for me and they would get some of the turkeys, so I thought she was wise to take me; but her mamma answered: "My dear, the wolves will be as much afraid of you and Cousin Isa

GRACIE AND HER PETS

in daylight as you will be of them, and I think Topsy will be in the way at school and better stay at home."

But Gracie said, "Please, mamma, let me take her ; I shall teach her to be good at school and she is so sensitive she will learn."

So her mamma did not say I could not go, so I attended every day. For a long time there were only four of us. Gracie and I and Genevieve and Norah (her donkey) and we had school in Genevieve's grandmother's parlor.

Norah and I were not allowed inside, but one day coming home from school (we had to walk about a mile and a half) I heard Cousin Isa say to Gracie: "Why were you so naughty this afternoon and laughed right out in school, and before visitors, too?"

"Why, Cousin Isa, how could I help it ; if you had seen that baby's face when it was trying to get its foot in its mouth you would have laughed, too," replied Gracie.

Well, we must change our schoolroom, so Mrs. Dudley can have her parlor for her company. So we moved into the hired men's house. I was so glad then for I could go inside. The children had soap boxes for desks, and smaller boxes for to sit on. The house is made of sod, real rough-looking inside, and outside the men had their saddles and clothes hanging on the wall, and the other ornaments were guns, spurs, ropes and pipes.

The house had one door and window ; on good days we had the door open, then Norah would stand half way through the door ; on bad days she could only look in at the window.

Well, on these days the men sat by the stove and mended the harness, and it was pretty hard for us to study.

Then two more children came and their dog, and then

GRACIE AND HER PETS

in a few more weeks we moved into our new schoolhouse farther west. I tell you we were lots of company for the children, and when anyone passed by the schoolhouse the other dog and I barked, and Norah brayed; then the children all would look out either at the door or windows, and if it happened to be emigrants passing, Gracie would cry out: "Oh, Cousin Isa, they will steal Topsy"; then Genevieve would say: "They will take Norah sure." Then both would exclaim: "May we go and bring them in?"

The teacher would look very dignified and say: "Of course not. What do you mean by leaving your seats?"

One day it was very cold and the wind was blowing real hard. Norah and I usually stayed where we were sheltered from the wind, but it being about dinner time, we were all at the door waiting for the children to come out; they had peeped out and one of them said: "Let's play school."

Norah and I were in hopes they would change their minds, and it would have been lucky for them if they had, for while we stood there a terrible gust of wind came (or as one of the children expressed it, a piece of a cyclone), struck the schoolhouse, burst open the door, and turned the schoolhouse over on its roof.

For a second all was still, and I thought surely they were all killed; then I heard such crying and screaming that I never can forget. Smash went a window. The teacher had broken it out with her hand. She had tried to raise a window, but the house being on its roof, she could not.

She got the children all out, then crawled through the broken window herself, for her dress was on fire; blood was streaming from her hand, cut by the window glass,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

and her face was burned, her hair singed and covered with ashes.

The children were crying and wringing their hands, not knowing what to do.

Then we saw men from Mr. Dudley's come running with all their might to their assistance. Some of them went into the building to save it from being burned, for the stove had been thrown against the teacher and now the house was on fire. Others took the teacher and all of us to Mr. Dudley's to be doctored. It was a sad walk, if only a short one. The children crying, and when asked if they were hurt, said no, they were crying for Cousin Isa; they felt so sorry for her; and in the midst of their crying Gracie said: "Genevieve, aren't you glad that Topsy and Norah didn't get hurt? Wouldn't it have been awful if they had been smashed under the house?"

It took two weeks for the teacher to get well. The others had a few bruises and burns, but we were very thankful it was no worse.

But all summer after that, when the wind blew, the children would cry and say: "Oh, Cousin Isa, let's go home. We are afraid the house will blow over again," although they were assured by the men that they had nailed it down tight and fast.

When the wind blew very hard and we all got scared, the teacher would close school and we would go and spend the rest of the day with Genevieve's mamma and grandmother.

The children were always good to us, gave us pie and cake and bread and meat; but Norah was not a bit nice at mealtime. She had very poor manners, for when she got her share of the dinner, she was never satisfied, but

GRACIE AND HER PETS

would eat up the paper boxes and the paper the dinner was wrapped in.

We ate our dinner in the shade at the side of the school-house and we all enjoyed it very much.

Well, Nero, children are very comical and quite a study for me. One day during vacation Gracie's mamma put her and a little companion to pulling weeds from the gravel walk around the house. They pulled very briskly for a while, when Gracie wanted to do something else; she loves change in her work. (A good, great deal of change and very little work.) Andy said: "Now, Gracie, if you don't pull more weeds, I'll just quit. I am pulling more than you are."

"Well, if you are," said Gracie, "I pulled the biggest. Just look at that beauty with the long roots!"

"Why, Gracie, I pulled that myself."

"You didn't."

"I did."

"You didn't."

"I did, did, did."

"Well, now, Andrew, you can just pull and I shall rake. I won't work with anyone so cranky."

"If you rake, I am going to the house and read all day and not play another bit."

"I was just in fun, Andy. If you won't go, I won't quarrel another speck. Let's make up and sing that hymn you sing in church, 'When He Cometh?'"

"When He cometh to make up His jewels." The two voices rise and fall slowly, when Andy stops and says: "You can't sing that worth a cent."

"Yes, I can, just as good as you can."

"No, you can't," he said, raising his head in great conceit. "Don't I sing in the choir?"

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"Hum! If you do, it has not improved your voice any," retorts Gracie.

You ask me what a choir is, Nero?

Well, I can't just tell you, as I have never been to church.

You see, the nearest church is twenty miles from here, and the folks can't drive down every Sunday. I think a choir must be something people sing into and it makes them better if it works right, for Gracie seemed to think it had not improved Andy any. Well, Gracie and Andy were fussing that way when her mamma called out: "What are you children quarreling about? It isn't nice to quarrel like cats and dogs."

I looked up at the speech, Nero, for Tabby and I don't quarrel that way. She will lie down on the porch with me, and when we are fed, I just wait till she gets what she wants to eat, then I take what she leaves, unless I have a pan of my own, which I generally do. Me quarrel? No, indeed. I think it is very unbecoming for dogs and cats to quarrel, and when one thinks of men quarreling and even fighting, and nice boys and girls so far forgetting themselves, it is strange, and never does any good, and grieves their loving parents, who try so hard to bring them up right.

Well, as I was saying, Gracie's mamma said they quarreled like cats and dogs; then they both spoke up. Gracie said: "Andy says I don't pull as many weeds as he does, and I can't work very fast 'cause I have a sore throat."

And Andy said: "Gracie wants to rake four times and that won't leave any raking for me to do."

Then she looked very sorrowful and said: "I am real sorry, children, that you can't agree. If you do not try to have patience with one another when you are young,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

and try to obey your parents, you will never make a good man or woman. Now, you will try, won't you? And when you get done with your work you can have some cookies."

Then they went to work with a will, and sang "Work, for the Night Is Coming," but stopped in the middle of the hymn and both laughed. Then they got knives to dig with. Gracie called hers "Little Butch" and Andy called his "Big Case." They dug and made the sand fly, and it got into each other's eyes. And just then I saw a big hawk sailing around trying to catch a chicken, and away I went after it, and when I returned they had finished their work and got their cookies. They divided with me and we were just as happy as if they had never said a cross word.

I think that is the redeeming part of children's quarrels; they forgive one another so soon. And we should follow their example of forgiving, whether we are old or young.

TOPSY.

Children, never disobey your parents. Had little Nero taken his mother Topsy's advice, he might have lived to be an old and respected dog, but he thought he knew best and got into wicked company and bad ways, killed chickens and was in other mischief, till finally he had to be put out of the way, and poor Topsy mourned the loss of her son. And should you ever be naughty enough to quarrel, be like Gracie and Andy—

Eat a cookie and make up.

HOPE.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER II.

CROPY.

CROPY. Yes, Cropy's my name; not a pretty name, but a very appropriate one, as you can see from my cropped ear. I think it a shame for man to disfigure by marks and brand man's best friend, the horse.

Cropy shook himself and drew a long breath like a sigh. As he looked back on the rest of the horses, that he, Mollie, Lottie and their colts had just run away from, he exclaimed: "I haven't been so tired in years as I feel to-day. I tell you, I have had a hard run and several kicks getting you two and the colts away from that rough crowd. I thought the mules would run the colts into the barbed-wire fence, in spite of all I could do. I am glad we can rest now in this nice shade, without anything to bother us. It's quite lonely without our young mistress, but she will be home from school soon, and her papa and mamma are so kind to us—not a thing to do but to eat and sleep.

Mollie looked at Cropy kindly as she replied: "Well, I think it is time you were turned out to grass. You have been pretty faithful and have had more patience with all the children you have taught how to ride, and take their abuse, and always seemed to enjoy it all. Well, I never could have had the patience you have had all these years I have known you, and I don't know how old you were when you came. You don't look old yet, but your cropped ear spoils your looks." And Mollie gave him a friendly nibble on his neck for his goodness to her and her baby.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"Our master gave me the name of Cropy. My Indian name was Papoose."

Lottie looked at him kindly and then at her colt, as she thought of the hard run he had after the mules and the horses, and of his kindness year after year in protecting the mothers and their little colts. She came up close and rubbed a fly off of her nose on his neck as she said: "This is such a nice place to rest. Tell us of your life among the Indians and cowboys."

"Well," replied Cropy, as he raised his head and looked away toward the high bluffs on the North Platte River. "I feel just in the mood for a good talk and we three are pensioners, so we won't be disturbed by any more work, and I hope by the mules. The first I remember was an Indian village, away up north among the pines, where hundreds of white tepees formed the village. The old Indian bucks with their pipes, paints, bows and arrows; the squaws with their papooses on their backs or hung up on a tree, securely tied in their beaded bed. I was being led by a boy about twelve years old, but he had been riding me for some time. Why, I remember this day in particular. It was the beginning of the Sun Dance, and Good Dog (my young master's name in English) was decorating himself and me for a race. People came from far and near to the agency to attend the Sun Dance, for that was the celebration of the year. The Indians had all kinds of wild dances, feasted on dog and dog soup. The squaws had their dance and made their own music by shaking a beaded rattle box and humming a tune like this: 'Ya-a-a-a, ya-a-a-a, ye-e-e-e, ye-e-e-e, ha-a-a-a, ha-a-a-a,' and would stand on their toes and bob up and down and keep time with the music. Good Dog was too young to take part with the young men

GRACIE AND HER PETS

in the great race to see who would be victor to cut down the tree for the Sun Pole.

“Some of their amusements hurt me, if I am an Indian. The worst was the marking the little papooses’ ears. The squaws would receive calico and other gifts and sometimes a pony. Then they would take their little babies, lay the little head on a block and have a hole cut in each ear with a butcher knife, and as soon as they were old enough they would wear ear-rings over a foot in length, made of Iroquois shells, tied in the ears with buckskin strings. Well, Good Dog mounted me and we had a good race. He then rode me right up to the great high Sun Pole, decorated at the top. A great crowd had surrounded it, and in the inner circle the Indians were squatted on the ground. He compelled me to push my way through the crowd right up to the pole. The sight that met my eyes frightened me so I ran over some of the men on the ground, then backed my way out. Then the whip was used so unmercifully over my head and back that I ran, never looking where I went, until Good Dog stopped me where they were marking the papoose and cried as he leaped to the ground: ‘Here is another brave papoose. You may mark him, too.’ And with another slash of his whip I was led up, and when I saw the butcher coming toward me with his knife I tried to get away, but two or three men held me, and the butcher cut off my left ear, and from that day I got the name of Papoose.”

Mollie wanted to know what Cropy saw at the Sun Pole that frightened him. “Being an Indian, I should be proud of their religious ceremonies, but to me it is a cruel test of bravery the Indians undergo at the Sun Pole. What I saw was an Indian stripped naked, only his breech

GRACIE AND HER PETS

clout left on; two gashes cut over the breastbone, each an inch or longer and about an inch apart; a wooden pin about six or eight inches long poked through under the skin. On each end of the pin was tied a strong buckskin string. They were tied to another string attached to the Sun Pole high enough so the victim could run out, swing, pull and twist about, and he would remain tied there until nature gave way. If the skin would not break, he was branded a coward, or a big brave if he could endure the scorching heat of the sun and the awful pain the sawing and pulling caused when the skin broke and he was set free. I was branded a coward then, but redeemed myself in later years.

"I had some happy days in my boyhood. Parties of Indians going on hunts after deer, antelope, and sometimes we brought home an elk or a buffalo. We ran races, the boys practicing shooting with round-headed wooden arrows, shooting under the horses, running at full speed, then the boys would lie flat on their backs and shoot; also hang from our backs in all kinds of Indian fashion. I went everywhere with Good Dog, but the most fun we had was on Issue Day. That was the day the Indians received cattle from the Government. Our present master had the contract with the Government to furnish cattle to the Indians. They furnished about three hundred head every ten days. He had the contract for three or four years. The cowboys drove the cattle from the Alamo Ranch, some thirty or more miles, to the corral out from the Agency, where they were put in large corrals made for the purpose. Good Dog and dozens of other boys would rollick around the corral, where they were not seen by the cowboys, and practice shooting with their wooden-headed arrows on the cattle, frightening the poor

GRACIE AND HER PETS

beasts till they could hardly be kept in the corrals, until the boys were discovered and routed out. Several head of cattle were weighed on scales there for that purpose. Then the names of the Indians who were to receive them were called out loud and long, the gate was then opened and the wild Texas cattle turned out to run for their lives, which was not long, for with two or three hundred Indians on horseback, with good guns, in pursuit, the ponies doing the best they could to keep the cattle from escaping, it was an exciting time to see men and boys by the hundreds galloping over the prairies, and at the crack, crack of the guns to see the steers drop one by one, until the prairie was dotted over with dead animals.

"By this time I was a full-grown horse, and Good Dog almost a man. We had seen many Issue Days together, so by the time the chief's name was called I was trembling with excitement, anxious for the race. The cattle would come out at the gate with a snort and a jump, dodge between wagons and horses, scatter the crowd on foot and break for liberty. The men did the killing, then the squaws drove up to the dead animals belonging to them and began skinning and cutting them, also loading into the wagons. Sometimes there were several small families grouped together, and there would be one animal furnished for all.

"After the cattle were all killed, skinned and loaded into wagons, or had gotten away—a few did sometimes, to be captured later on—such a string of wagons, buggies, cowboys on horseback, Indians on horseback, horse racing and hundreds and hundreds on foot formed quite a procession going back to the Agency. The next of importance I remember was when Good Dog fell in love. He had been sighing around for several days, standing often

GRACIE AND HER PETS

with one arm thrown over my neck, watching a tepee where a fine-looking maiden was going out and in, hanging up fresh meat on ropes to dry in the sun. She would cast a shy glance at him and smile or pretend not to see him. He saw her walk away from the village one day, and at once ran after her. She saw him coming and then the chase began. She was very fleet of foot, but he overtook her in a glen some distance from the village. He threw his arms about her and at the same time his blanket was thrown around them both. They were so enveloped by the blanket that nothing but their smiling faces were visible. I had trotted behind and was enjoying the fun, when my eyes caught sight of a large rattlesnake coiled ready to strike the girl. I started back and snorted so loudly that they naturally jumped away from it just in time to save the girl. Good Dog soon took the coil out of its skin. Then he petted me and so did the girl, and I was held in great favor ever after.

"I had won many races for Good Dog, so when he, with many other young and old braves, painted their faces, and some put on the large war bonnets. The war bonnet is really ornamental. It is made of eagle feathers, and when placed on a good-looking Indian's head is quite becoming. They went on the war path and took part in the battle of Wounded Knee. The Indians were stirred up to strife by a false Messiah, who held Ghost Dances, where the Indians donned Ghost Shirts made from unbleached muslin, painted with red and green paint and decorated with eagle and turkey feathers. The shirts were put on and they danced and whirled and spun like a top, until they were so dizzy and crazy they would have to lie down. Then they said they went into a trance and saw visions. They were told by the Messiah that they could

GRACIE AND HER PETS

go into battle and no bullet could harm them, as the shirts were bullet-proof. But all who have heard or read of the battle of Wounded Knee know how many of the poor misguided Indians were found dead with the Ghost Shirt on them.

"The famous 'Buffalo Bill' and others got some of the shirts and brought them home with them as souvenirs. Good Dog was badly wounded in the battle, but I managed to bring him home, where he died soon after. I was sold soon after, with a bunch of cow ponies, to our present master, who had a large cattle ranch called the Alamo Ranch. We were driven to the ranch and turned loose with a big bunch of roundup horses. I was chosen from the bunch I came with to go on the roundups. Our master called out: 'Give Wilks old Cropy to ride.' The boys laughed and joked about my looks, so that is when I received the name of Cropy, and have gone by that name ever since.

"Wilks was a good horseman and could ride like an Indian. He was very kind to me and taught me all kinds of tricks. One was to buck. I could almost tie myself into a knot, jump, buck and twist. He would sit and laugh and say: 'Good for you, old boy.' I always knew when he wanted me to buck. He would give me a light touch with his whip, behind the saddle. We had lots of fun. One day we were cutting out some cows, when a big fellow rode up. Wilks said to one of the boys: 'Here comes the dude. He is such a tenderfoot and thinks he knows so much, let's have some fun out of him.'

"He had only been out from St. Louis a short time. He watched me cut out cow after cow, then said: 'That is very nicely done. I believe if I had such a horse I could do equally as well.'

GRACIE AND HER PETS

“‘You may try him, Mr. Mac,’ said Wilks, as he dismounted from my back. I tell you, Mr. Mac was a load, and he took so long to mount, and the first thing he did was to run his big spurs into my sides. I gave a jump and he gave me a lick behind the saddle, and before I thought, I went to bucking. He didn’t stay long in the saddle, but went sprawling over my head. I didn’t run away, but went trotting back to Wilks, who had been standing by his horse’s side, watching to see how Mr. Mac would take it. Wilks and the other boys were bent double with laughter. Mr. Mac came limping up and Wilks tried to ask him if he were hurt, but could not for laughing. Mr. Mac remarked as he reached out his hand to take his own horse: ‘I presume I shall have to get acquainted with your horse before I can ride him.’

“Another day we were branding calves, and Mr. Mac was in the corral helping, but more in the way than any help. He was throwing his lariat rope trying to catch a calf by the heel, heeling them, the boys called it. Well, our master had a big yearling tied to a post. Oh, but the yearling was mad. He was just ready to butt any one, but was tied very short. Mr. Mac was stooping down throwing his rope around the calf’s hind legs, when our master thought to have some fun, so he motioned to Wilks to loosen the rope that held the yearling far enough to reach Mr. Mac, so he just gave one jump and gave him such a bump he went sprawling among the cows and calves. Mac jumped to his feet in a hurry looking as mad as the calf. He came back trying to rub the dust and dirt off his hands and clothes to where Wilks and master were laughing, and had just finishing tying the yearling to the post. He said, looking at Wilks: “Sir, I would get very angry indeed if I thought for a moment you did that

GRACIE AND HER PETS

on purpose.' 'Why, Mac,' replied Wilks, laughing so he could hardly speak, 'you wouldn't think I would do that on purpose, surely. But it was funny, just the same.'

"I was Wilks' horse for several years, then he left and John Johns got me to ride. He was the horse 'rustler'; had charge of all the horses. He was very good to me; only when he got mad at the horses he would put spurs and whip to me. Poor old John. I remember one night we were coming home from the horse ranch. It was in the winter. I never was out in a darker night. I did my best to find my way home, but got out of the way and wandered around for miles. John had to walk at times to keep from freezing. The boys were expecting us at the home ranch. When we were in despair, thinking we were out for the night, we heard a shot, then another, and turned in the direction of the shooting, and after we had gone some distance we saw a blinking light, like a star, and knew it must be at the home ranch. When we arrived there, almost frozen and so tired we were almost ready to drop, we saw the light was on the top of the pine-covered mountain by the ranch and was told by the boys it was a lantern tied on a pole. I tell you, the boys were glad to see us, and John said: 'Boys, the light saved us. When I pass in my checks, I want to be planted where the pole stands.' Little did we think that very thing would come to pass before the winter was over, and in such a dreadful way. The winter set in very early. A heavy snow fell early in the fall; so early, in fact, and so deep, master thought it not safe to take our mistress, sister and little daughter to the railroad, which was a long distance to drive, thinking the snow would melt and there would be time to get them to the railroad so

GRACIE AND HER PETS

they could go to their city homes for the winter. The snow had come to stay for the winter, and one snow after another covered the range, drifted in places twenty feet deep. That was a dreadful hard winter on cattle and horses. The cattle would drift before a storm right over the banks into the river, where hundreds lost their lives. In the spring along the banks of the river, hundreds of dead cattle's bones were bleaching in the sun. The mistress and her sister made the best of the situation for themselves and the boys. The house was built out of hewn pine logs.

"The boys had a big room called the corral, which was used for sitting room and bedroom; on two sides it had two rows of beds or "bunks" as the boys called them. My mistress had a dining-room, bedroom, sitting and bedroom combined, where there was a big fireplace. The ceiling and walls of the rooms were covered with muslin, tacked on. Kirk, the cook, did the cooking for all. The master was called to St. Louis on important business, and Christmas was drawing near. Plans were being made to celebrate. A turkey was ordered from Sidney, silk handkerchiefs sent away for, and other gifts; also things to decorate the Christmas tree. The boys sent for presents for the ladies and for the little Wild Rose of the Alamo, the name given to little Floy Goff by the cowboys. The excitement ran high when Mr. Mac and little Patsy were selected to go to Camp R to get the mail and the things they had ordered some time before. We had a tramp of over thirty miles to bring those precious things. Whiskey was forbidden on the ranch, but Mr. Mac liked his toddy too well to let it alone when he was where he could get it, so proposed to Patsy they get several bottles of whiskey for Christmas and hide them out. So when we returned,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

pretty well loaded—I had the honor of carrying the turkey, something of value—tied in a sack and tied on behind my saddle. Patsy was light of weight, and I thought light of head, from the way he talked and held on to the saddle.

“We were tired tramping through the snow, and it was all the men could do to sit in their saddles, for they had looked on the whiskey too often. John Johns asked Patsy what made him stagger so. He answered thickly: ‘Ridin’ in the wind and smoking a cigar.’ John made up his mind if they had whiskey he would watch his chance and get some, although master had forbidden it on the ranch. I was thankful the folks were looking for the master home soon. Mac hid the bottles in my manger, and they were not disturbed for some time. Could I have foreseen the trouble those bottles of whiskey would cause, I would have tried to smash them then and there.

“At last Christmas morning dawned; the sun was shining brightly on the snow-covered pine trees, which were such a dark, rich green; the snow also was piled up on the low earth-covered roof of the ranch; such a quiet, beautiful morning. The boys were all dressed up in their best clothes and ready for any sport. A good deal of shooting was done just to celebrate. Then the Christmas tree was brought from the mountain near the ranch—such a fine big evergreen—and to hear the boys talk you would have thought half of them had never seen a Christmas tree before. The Christmas tree was set up in the big bedroom, where the furniture had been removed to make room for the tree, and seats—for the boys had been all invited from the sign riders’ camps and from the horse ranch to come and spend Christmas and visit a few days. Sign riders were men who lived a certain distance apart

GRACIE AND HER PETS

in log houses to see that the cattle did not get off the range. The boys' long table was taken from the kitchen to the dining-room, for it took a long table to hold them all. Kirk, the cook, was in his glory. The table was loaded with good things to eat. The boys were seated around waiting for the turkey to be placed on the table, which was done with a grand finish, Kirk waiting to see the effect the twenty-three pound turkey would have on the boys. He was satisfied when he saw them look from one to the other, then at the turkey, and Patsy made them all laugh by rising and making his best bow to the bird. The evening was all too short, for the boys were in for having a good time. They sang cowboy songs, some of them quite pathetic, others on the roving order. Kirk played on the violin and guitar. Then, after the presents were distributed, the boys adjourned to the kitchen and had a dance among themselves. It was a night long to be remembered. The excitement and the work had been too much for Mrs. Martin. She was taken with nervous chills before morning and there was some talk of sending for a doctor if she got worse. The boys seemed rather quiet next day. They sat around, some reading and some playing cards, but I knew there was a storm brewing. John Johns had found the whiskey, had taken a big drink with Mac, had come back the last thing and hid it in another place. He said while talking to Mac: 'If that skunk, Tim Turner, don't keep out of my way I'll make him bite the dust yet. I haven't settled up with him yet for what I owed him in New Mexico.' He said this with a harsh laugh. The whiskey was already doing its work. How would the night end? Just after they left, in came Tim Turner and his camp partner. Tim said: 'I don't want to have no trouble with John, but I can't very well

GRACIE AND HER PETS

leave to-night, as we have to take out provisions for the camp and a man wouldn't fare very well if he got lost this kind of a night; but I will promise you, for Mrs. Martin's and her sister's sake, and the dear little Wild Rose, I will keep out of John's way, if possible.'

"Next morning Tim was up bright and early, fed and harnessed his horses before breakfast, and I thought the storm had blown over, when John came in and looked all about him, then made a run for the whiskey, took a long, big swig, looked at the bottle and took the rest of it. Now, what I am going to relate to you about the tragedy, I heard from the boys as they talked about it in the barn, and when some of them were riding me. Tim had got his wagon loaded, but in getting out the lard he was to take with him to camp, he had cut his hand on the big tin can he had scooped the lard out of. When he went into the sitting-room to bid the ladies good-bye, little Floy met him at the door and saw the blood on his hand the first thing, and said, as she took him by the hand: 'Tum to my mamma and 'et her tie oor hand up, Timmie.' 'Why, yes, let me put something on your hand before you go out in the cold,' exclaimed Mrs. Goff as she looked at the cut he had made. Tim said he was in a hurry to go and his glove would be enough. He thanked her for her kindness and bade her tell Mrs. Martin he was sorry she was not well and to thank her for the good time she had given them. Little Floy still held his hand when he went through the kitchen into the boys' corral, where the bunks were two deep along the wall. Tim's bunk was the top one next to the kitchen door. He had left his cartridge belt and revolver in it, and thought he would go quietly in, get it and go away, early though it was. John Johns, Patsy O'Connor, Johnnie Biggs, the overseer,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

and Mac were around a low table playing cards, about their only pastime. John sat facing the kitchen door and the bunk where Tim had to climb up to get his revolver. John's trunk was by the side of the table and his revolver in the till of the trunk, so when Tim came in, John reached down and quietly raised the lid far enough open so he had his right hand on the revolver. He had only one good eye, and that was his right one. He said, as Tim took hold of the upper bunk with his left hand, so he could pull himself up and reach with his right hand for his revolver: 'I would like to settle with you,' at the same time partly raising up, when little Wild Rose, with her sweet, smiling face and fluffy, curly head, looked into the room, and when Tim stepped down, revolver in his right hand, she took him by the left hand and said: 'Tum, Timmie, 'et my mamma tie oor hand.' Tim held the child behind his back. The bullets were flying fast, and John sank down with a groan, shot through the heart. All was confusion. The boys scattered in every direction. One bullet had grazed Frank Cross' leg as he sat on a lower bunk just behind John, reading. Frank was the book-keeper. He and Tim ran in to Mrs. Martin's room. She had been lying down on a couch by the kitchen partition wall. Mrs. Goff had just gone into her own room when they heard the shots fired and little Floy screamed and someone cried out that somebody was killed. Mrs. Martin did not catch the name. She ran toward the door, when she met Tim with his smoking revolver in his hand and Frank behind him trying to tell what had happened. She tried to pass them, but they held her back. Many of the others had come into the sitting-room. But where was little Floy? Mrs. Goff cried: 'What have you done with my baby? Have you killed my child?'

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"It was too much for Mrs. Martin in her weakened condition, and she fainted dead away. Frank carried her back to her couch, where she was revived again, but the shock threw her into another nervous chill, followed by fever. What should they do? In the absence of master they hardly knew what to do. But it was evident they would have to get the doctor, if it were possible. Frank went to find Mr. Goff, whom he met leading little Floy, crying as though her heart would break, sobbing, 'They hurted my poor Don.' In the confusion she had been pushed aside, and the father found her standing looking at poor John, with her hands clasped and her eyes dry and frightened. But when he spoke she ran to him, crying 'They hurted my poor Don.' Yes, she loved John and he worshipped her. He had carried her on his shoulder on horseback so many times, with her little arms around his neck—oh, so many times have I trotted back and forth just to please her. The other boys would take her for rides, too, and she had no fear. When I would gallop by the ranch, where she could see her mother, she would wave her little pink sunbonnet at her and laugh.

"John would talk to her as he held her by the hand to steady her on his shoulder. 'My little Wild Rose, if I had met you years ago I might have been a better man. Do you love me, little girl?' 'I 'ove 'oo, Don; I hug 'oo tight.' His voice trembles. 'You are the only one who loves me, without it is mother. And I haven't seen her for twenty years. Oh, the folly of drink, a high temper and a hot head in a young man. It has been my ruin.' It was again his ruin and his death. Mr. Goff turned Floy over to her mother, and after a look at mistress, hastened to find Frank Cross and Patsy to send them in haste after the doctor at the fort. Frank saddled the master's big

GRACIE AND HER PETS

sorrel saddle horse and Patsy quickly threw the saddle on me. As they worked they talked about the serious illness of mistress and about the tragedy.

"They wondered why it was that John, being such a sure shot, had shot so wide of his mark. Was it because of his blind eye or—and they looked at each other, and the same thought seemed to be in their minds—had the sight of the baby shaken his nerves and he had shot high for her sake? Had he given his life for her sake? The boys could say no more. They knew John was an outlaw and had brought on the fight. Tim either had to shoot him or be shot himself. But the tears were in their eyes when they thought of his love for the Wild Rose and the enjoyment he had in repeating the little funny things she said and did, one saying, 'I has my bootses on,' when Floy had her little rubber boots on to keep her feet dry, for she loved to wade in mud and water. Her mother found her sitting in a mud puddle playing, and, when scolded for it, looked up innocently and replied: 'I has my bootses on.' The same reply when her mother found her sitting on her little red chair in a tub of water. She had just been dressed in a white dress and had her 'bootses' on.

"Now I ramble in my thoughts. Well, we started for the fort and had probably not gone half way when we were suddenly brought to a standstill. We had lost the road and came suddenly upon a deep snowdrift. We backed out the best we could, tried again and again to find our way. We were in a ravine and the snow was drifted about twenty feet deep. The men were snow blind and so cold they could hardly hold the bridle reins, so the only thing we could do was to follow our old tracks back home. We arrived home in time to see Tim and one

GRACIE AND HER PETS

of the boys starting out on horseback. Tim was going to give himself up to the Sheriff. Mr. Goff thought it best to get him off the ranch, although all of the boys knew Tim shot in self-defense. Still, John had friends, and they would make it too hot for Tim to stay any longer on the ranch.

"Mrs. Goff and her husband moved Mrs. Martin into her bedroom, where she would be away from the sound and talk she could not help hearing from the boys' room, where Mac and Mr. Goff had to perform the last sad rites for poor John. The cowboys would not touch their dead comrade. What else could be done? There could be no inquest held, so a coffin was made and lined with a sheet, a pillow to fit in it. He had always said he wished to die with his boots on, so he was placed in the coffin with his best suit on, boots and all, just as he had died, and his red Christmas handkerchief about his neck. Four of the boys with axes and spades climbed to the top of the pine-covered mountain to dig the grave, for they had not forgotten John's request to be planted where the pole stood, and where it was left standing when the grave was finished. Charley Nebo, another of the old cowboys, went on horseback to find the trail so a wagon or sled could reach the top, while the others were getting everything in readiness for the funeral.

"It was late in the afternoon when the solemn procession started for the top of the mountain. They did not have far to go, but, oh, such a day to be out! The two boys who had found the trail rode in advance to pilot them, and could hardly be seen through a fog of dry, snow. It was blowing and drifting about, and onto the blanket-covered box, and in places the snow was so deep, many stops had to be made before they reached the top

GRACIE AND HER PETS

of the mountain. Patsy drove the sled team and the other boys rode, two and two, behind. It was a weird-looking procession one could never forget. The grave was partly filled with snow, and the pine trees were moaning a funeral dirge in the wind. The coffin was lowered into the snow-lined grave without a prayer, without a tear, and, as Mrs. Martin would have said: 'Having no hope and without God in the world.' The master was on his way to the ranch when he met Tim Turner, who told him all that had happened. He was advised by Mr. Martin, the master, to go home to his mother and not return to the ranch. The master left his buggy at the horse ranch and took one of the best riding horses, so he would be able to travel faster through the deep snow. He never slacked his speed, only in wading through the drifts of snow, till he reached the Alamo Ranch, sixty miles distant from the horse ranch. He reached home about two o'clock in the morning, horse and rider exhausted. He saw the light in their bedroom window as he neared the ranch, and thought his wife was dead. When he opened the door and saw the smile of welcome on her face, he fell on his knees by her bed, took her in his arms, but could only say 'Thank God.' That ride through the snow almost finished horse and rider, but in a week or so they were ready for the road again. As soon as spring opened and the weather was warm enough for the ladies to travel in their ambulance to the railroad, they went back to their city home.

"You know I feel like I have known our young mistress Gracie for a long, long time. I always count her with my Indian and cowboy life, although she only spent one summer on the ranch, and that when she was only a year old. Her mother with a party of friends came out to

GRACIE AND HER PETS

the ranch a little over a year after she and Mrs. Goff went home. Mistress Gracie was a little blue-eyed, golden-haired baby, too small for the boys to take much stock in, only to look at her in the nurse's arms or take the tiny hands in theirs. We were very busy getting ready for our last issue of cattle to the Indians. Some of the boys were rounding up the cattle, others cutting out the cows and calves, some holding under herd the beeves to be issued, some finding the beeves to be shipped. The camp cook was kept busy enough to get food cooked for such an outfit. Then one day the ladies drove out to camp to see the cutting out of the cattle, and brought a feast of good things—a big dinner already cooked, chicken, several kinds of vegetables and pies by the wholesale. How the boys did enjoy such a dinner, after living on camp 'grub,' or 'chuck,' as it was always called in camp.

"I felt I had been promoted, for master had chosen me to ride on the roundup and to go with the cattle to the Agency. He said: 'Give me old Cropy. He may not be so big as some of the other horses, but is sure-footed on a run and always to be trusted. If you leave him standing anywhere untied, you will be sure to find him waiting patiently for your return.' That is why I am here to-day taking my rest. I tried in all things to please my master. We started with the herd to the Agency. When we reached the home ranch the ladies were ready to start in the ambulance. Master's uncle was to drive the beautiful chestnut sorrel ambulance team, shipped from St. Louis for that purpose. They went ahead of the herd, but were soon out of sight. Another cause for hurry, the master and mistress, his uncle and aunt, were invited to be present at Missionary Park's wed-

GRACIE AND HER PETS

ding, who was to marry the post trader's sister, a young teacher who had been helping him with his work among the Indians. The ladies were entertained at the post trader's home, and were kept busy next morning bringing in vines and wild flowers (wild roses in profusion) to decorate the little chapel and the house for the great event. The wedding was beautiful in its simplicity, and unique, being conducted in a church almost filled with Indians, hardly room for invited guests; outside the Indians, squaws, papooses, dogs and cowboys on horseback formed a line from the house to the church, and could hardly be kept from cheering as the bride and groom drove to the church. A big feast was given to the Indians that night, and they furnished entertainment for the strangers with music and all kinds of Indian dances. Mistress told master on the way home that the wedding supper and entertainment were 'royal.' But, oh, the awful night she and auntie put in from the terrible odor that comes from the cattle hides drying in the corral adjoining the house. The dining-room door and windows opened on to this corral, and the odor was something awful at mealtime. The bedroom windows opened on it, and it was hard for strangers to sleep till they got used to it. After each issue the Indians sold the green hides to the post trader. The hides were stretched and pinned to the ground by the hundreds with the flesh side up to dry in the hot sun. The house and outbuildings were surrounded by a stockade, with locked gates for safety and to keep the Indians from stealing.

"A few weeks later these kind friends of the Indians felt they were in much need of protection. Missionary Park and his wife were to move to Standing Rock Agency and were packing to move, but took time to have a meet-

GRACIE AND HER PETS

ing in the little chapel to baptize our little mistress Gracie, where again the chapel was almost filled with interested Indians to see the lovely, golden-haired papoose baptized and to bid their beloved missionary and wife good-bye.

"The cattle issue was next day. How I longed to be an Indian again and take part in the exciting race after the cattle, but my master rode me and had to oversee the issue. How vivid the memory of that last issue is to me; hundreds and hundreds of squaws driving in wagons, the bucks on horseback, the cowboys on their bucking broncos and their tingling spurs flashing in the sunlight, the hundreds of dogs and boys and girls on foot, the heat and dust something dreadful, but all were laughing and talking, and appeared to be having a good time. Master rode beside the ambulance. He asked mistress how she liked the issue.

"She said: 'It is very exciting to see all the racing and chasing, the bucking horses and those that ran away. All the Indians in their gala dress. But, oh, how dreadful to see so many poor, inoffensive cattle shot down just to cater to man's appetite!' Then she exclaimed: 'There's something pretty! Just look at that cute papoose with those pretty beaded moccasins on, just about Gracie's age, too. I wonder if the mother would sell them off her little one's feet?' Master rode up to the wagon and asked the squaw if she would sell the moccasins. She kept laughing and answering 'Shulawashaa' ('I don't understand'); but when I had a good look at her I knew she did understand, for it was Good Dog's mother and little sister. The Indian agent saw our predicament and came to the rescue. He said a few words to her in Sioux. She said, 'Two dol's,' and he said, 'No, one dol.' She smilingly pulled off the little moccasins, beaded all over, soles and all, and handed them to him for one

GRACIE AND HER PETS

dollar. Then mistress had him ask if the young woman with the little boy was her daughter and son. She shook her head and said, 'Good Dog's squaw and papoose.'

"I knew it was Good Dog's young squaw, and was so glad to see them, and they recognized me. I stuck my nose in her lap while master was talking, and she put the young Good Dog's hand on my head. The mistress wondered why there were tears in the young squaw's eyes. I could have told her; they were tears shed for the young husband who had been called away to war and to death so soon after their wedding. That was the last link, and the last time I was ever among the Indians, for it was only a few weeks after this the Indians became restless and began preparing for war. They claimed the agent was neither just nor honest with them. The Government had sent a fine carriage to the chief. When he sent to get it, the agent asked him to sign a receipt. He refused, said he signed for other things, but the carriage was sent for him, and he wanted it.

"The agent, a brave and just man, tried to explain he had to have a receipt to return to the Government to show the chief had received it, but he still refused. The agent felt he had the mounted police and they would fight for him, but he wanted peace.

"There were many meetings with the agent and the head Indians, and with the white men who had their families at the Agency. There were many council meetings among the Indians, and the hot-headed young men wanted to go to war. A messenger was sent to the Alamo Ranch to warn master and family to fly for their lives. Master sent word that he could not leave just then, and wanted mistress and his uncle and aunt to go home. He would send a guard of men with them. Mistress replied if he were

GRACIE AND HER PETS

in danger she would stay with him. But there was a spy kept on the Indians and all was in readiness for flight if war was declared. At the Agency, among the white families, there was much weeping and prayer for God's protection.

"A pathetic scene was enacted at the post trader's house. A good many of the worst Indians were prowling about the place, looking fierce and painted up ready for the war path. The father and mother gave up all hope, and the mother said: 'Let us prepare the little ones for death if it be God's will to take them home.' The father walked the floor and prayed, while the mother talked, wept and prayed and talked to her family. The older girls combed their hair and put on their white dresses, while the brave mother was dressing the twins, two years old. But when she came to her smiling baby boy, only a few months old, she cried: 'Oh, husband, how can we stand this?' She hugged the little one to her in her husband's arms, then broke away to finish the dressing before it was too late, for they heard loud talking and much galloping of horses by the house. She dressed the babe and herself, then they all knelt down to pray, except the twins, and they wanted to go 'bye-bye.' At last they were startled from their praying by loud knocking and were told by the agent that the crisis was past, but that the sword had been suspended above their heads as by a thread, war was so imminent.

"This was told to mistress by the post trader's wife, pale and trembling, although several years had passed since it happened. Well, you know master sold the Alamo Ranch soon after and bought this ranch in Nebraska. My heart was sad, for he had been so kind to me and I thought it was good-bye to my happy days, and so it was

GRACIE AND HER PETS

for several years, for the man that bought the cattle and horses was heartless. He had no thought for our comfort, our food or our health, and I was soon broke down and turned in with the scalawag horses, to run out in the winter and pick up what we could get. And in snow-storms there was little to get, only to eat the bark and branches of the cottonwood trees.

"My new master was a hard drinking man and the ranch soon ran down, for he spent much of his time at the Agency when he could gamble and get the whiskey he had shipped in; so it came about when the last payment was to be made to Mr. Martin for the cattle it wasn't forthcoming, and my eyes were gladdened once more by a sight of my old master, who gave my new master a straight talk, and finally rounded enough of the cattle to pay the debts, and hired some of the old cowboys to help him drive the cattle down here. They were looking for work and glad to find an old friend, and what was my joy when he picked me out of the herd for the sake of 'auld lang syne,' as he said, for himself to ride, to help drive the cattle home. Home! how sweet it sounds to us now.

"Well, you remember what a fool I made of myself the first day I came. The mistress came outside of the front yard to meet master. I remembered her and was looking for pretty little mistress Gracie, when master picked up a little girl with golden hair, curls and big blue eyes and said: 'See, darling, I have brought you a riding horse,' and sat her in the saddle. It frightened me so for the minute I backed away from master and the little girl screamed. Mistress cried: 'Oh, papa, hold on to her.'

"I had never had a girl on my back and I didn't know how to behave. Master gave me a slap as he led me up,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

and said: 'You old rascal, Cropy, don't you know your old and your new mistress?' Mistress cried: 'Why, is this old Cropy? I am so glad you brought him back to us,' and said, as she led mistress Gracie up to me, 'Pat him, dearie; he is an old friend.' And still I tried to back away, for I had had such rough treatment for years and never saw a woman all those years.

"Well, you know how it ended. I became my little mistress' slave. I was led out several times a day and the little one held on my back. I was fed apples and sugar out of her little hand, and before long a little side saddle came and she was able to guide me about the yard herself. Then as she grew older and the mother had more confidence in me, I was trusted with the whole family on my back to take long rides, for, as you know, she was the only child.

"Sometimes I felt sorry for the lonely child in the winter, when the only companion and playfellow was myself and Topsy, the dog. She would stand me by the haystack, then she would have one or two carpenter's wooden horses with cow tails fastened on them with rabbit ears where the head should be. Then Topsy tied to the stack, then herself with a cow tail tied to her coat tail, all in a row eating hay, stamping our feet and switching our tails, as happy a family as you ever saw. Our mistress was always afraid something would happen to her little girl, and she would have been more uneasy if she had seen some of the tricks she would teach me. She would take me out behind the barn when no one was around to see her and get me to bucking. I was very careful to buck easy, so she wouldn't fall off, but she would stick to me like a sand burr and laugh in great glee, and say we will surprise the folks some day. And

GRACIE AND HER PETS

so she did when some friend came to visit and brought their boy and girl along, about mistress Gracie's age. The father, a photographer, had me brought into the front yard and my picture, with mistress Gracie on my back, taken. Then the boy and girl, Frank and Ira Broach, were put on beside her and we were taken again. I tried to look my best, for it was the first time I ever had my picture taken, and I wanted to be remembered in after years. Then mistress Gracie took the saddle off my back and threw it on a chair and as she leaped to my back, she said: 'Now, get ready, Mr. Broach, to take us on the fly.' He peeped under the cloth, looked through a second, gave a few directions about how to sit, for he didn't know what was coming, then said, be ready, and with that mistress Grace flipped me back of the saddle with her whip and I bucked. Mr. Broach yelled: 'My goodness, hold on to him.' Mistress screamed, but mistress Grace just patted me and laughed, but the pictures were good, for she showed them to me.

"By the time she was twelve or thirteen years old she had no fear of horses. 'I remember one time she had cause for fear,' replied Mollie. 'She was riding me out in the pasture to catch you or Lottie, for by that time, you know, she used all three of us to ride, and had us for her girl and boy friends to ride when they came to visit her. Well, she was riding among the horses, when Lady Planet let fly at a horse and kicked mistress Grace on the top of the foot. She let out one scream after another and I galloped all the way home with her crying at the top of her voice. The mistress was awfully frightened, and mistress Grace was laid up for weeks before she was able to walk again. I could never understand why Planet was so ill-natured and vicious to the rest of us.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

She was always kicking and biting. No horse ever had a better mother. Lady Maud has been the buggy and carriage horse for years and the pet of the family, and always set the rest of us a good example by her quiet and gentle ways.'

"I remember one time, Lottie, you thought I wasn't gentle, when you gave me such a scolding for running away with mistress Grace. That morning she was up as early as the men. She came out to the barn to bridle me, but couldn't find her own bridle. She fussed and scolded around about some of the men using it. I could have told her she threw it down in the weeds by the corral gate when she went to shut the heavy gate. The bridles were all in use. She was really cranky with me; jerked my head about when she was trying to fit a bridle she was making out of binding twine. At last she had it made to her satisfaction and jumped on astride of my back without her saddle. We passed the house on the gallop and she gave a shout that an Indian would have been proud of, and away we went to the pasture to bring in the horses. We got them headed for home. They were running and kicking and having such a time that I forgot I had anyone on my back, and, having only a string in my mouth, I didn't feel. I ran right into the middle of the herd and kicked and squealed as hard as any of them. Oh, but my mistress Grace was mad. But she held to my mane and stuck her feet in my sides, and the whole herd came up to the corral on the dead run with me in the midst of them. Her mother was almost frightened into a spasm, but her father just laughed and laughed when he saw she was only angry and not hurt, and saw the kind of bridle I had on. She jumped off as soon as I stopped and said to her father: 'Cropy thinks

GRACIE AND HER PETS

he is smart, but I'll teach him something.' She took her little quirt and gave me a good switching. It pleased her and didn't hurt me any, but I'd deserved it if it had, for I might have hurt her, and then I betrayed my trust. Some times she imposed upon me awfully, though.

"One summer her cousins, Bob and Anita, were spending the summer with her, and I tell you they put me through. They almost lived on my back. It was either one or the other that wanted to ride me, and sometimes all three would get on astride of my back. Well, it makes me laugh yet when I think how I got even with them one day. They were used to playing and bathing in the irrigation ditch through our pasture. It's so near the house it was handy for them, and so nicely shaded by the wild grapevines and yellow willow growing on its bank; we had to cross it then, as now, coming from the pasture, where they all three had ridden me looking for a prairie dog town. They galloped right up to the bank of the ditch, never caring to go to the crossing. The bank was quite steep, and when my forefeet touched the bottom of the ditch I dropped my head quickly and all three went over my head, head over heels, into the ditch. Such screaming and laughing as they did. I saw they were all right and trotted on to the corral. Well, I run with these children so long and they were so full of pranks, I got kiddish myself. I fooled mistress. One day she wanted to ride me a mile or two to visit her niece. Mistress is rather timid about horses, and, as you know, always kind, so it was a shame to fool her. She had only trotted a short distance from the house when I began to grunt and groan at every step. She let me walk, and still I groaned. She patted me on the neck and said: 'Poor Cropy, I fear you have the colic.' When we got

GRACIE AND HER PETS

to the niece's home, mistress said: 'Poor Crop, I am afraid, is sick.' When she was ready to return home, I thought I would fool her again, so when she mounted me and started out, I began to groan soon again. She rode back. The niece said: 'Why, he ate hearty enough. I believe he is fooling you.' Mistress Grace and a girl friend came on the scene. They had walked up to go back with her mother. She heard her mother say: 'No, I think he has colic yet. He groans so hard when he tries to trot.' Mistress Grace said: 'Let us try him, mamma.' I knew there was no use to sham her, so when they both mounted me and gave me a keen slash with her whip, I went to bucking, then off in a gallop. She soon brought me back to her mother, laughing, with the remark: 'He's an old fraud, mamma. Papa says anyone can pull the wool over your eyes, and Crop knows it. You get back on and we will walk behind, and if he dares to let out one groan he will hear from me.'

"We all have little mean streaks in our natures, if we only allow ourselves to be tempted. We want to profit by what our young mistress used to sing: 'Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin. Each victory will help you some other to win.' I have had a very eventful life. Much gladness, some sadness and now comfort for my old age. Now that the cool of the evening is here, let us go and refresh ourselves with a good supper of green grass and be truly thankful to kind friends who provides us with this haven of rest."

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER III.

ROBBIE'S RANCH RAMBLES.

It seemed as if Gracie could not wait until Robbie came. He and his mamma were coming from St. Louis to spend a month or two on Glenburnie Ranch. The idea of having a playmate for a whole month had set her eager fancy to work planning the big times they would have.

She had asked her mamma all about him, how large and how old he was, and seemed disappointed to learn he was only five years old.

She imagined she was quite large when she was eight. She had counted the days over and over until the eventful Thursday when they would drive over to the little station in the sandhills to meet her cousin Sarah and Robbie, her son.

It was a beautiful August morning when Gracie, her papa and mamma drove over in the big old carriage with Black Maude trotting easily over the road.

It was only seven o'clock, and how fresh and beautiful the prairies looked and how refreshing to breathe in the pure air and enjoy looking at the beautiful prairie flowers that grew in abundance everywhere around them. Gracie could not be still. She was up and down every few moments to see if it were possible to get an earlier glimpse of the station or the train, and asking mamma if she thought Robbie would like Topsy (her dog) or if she thought he would be a rough boy like Tom Jones, who never had a real live dog and only stick horses.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

Before they arrived in sight of the station they heard the passenger train, and in a moment more saw her come around the big sandhill. "Oh, papa, do you suppose they have come?" exclaimed Gracie, in her eagerness climbing out on the carriage steps. "Maybe the train would not wait for them to get off." But now they are in sight of the station, which looks rather lonely in the midst of a forest of sunflowers and sandhills for a background.

"Oh, yes, they have come; I am sure I see them walking on the platform," and Gracie clapped her hands in great glee.

Maude had a hard pull through the sand to the station and had to go very slow. Robbie jumped down off the platform and ran to meet them, crying as he ran: "Hello, there, Gracie. I have a nice big orange for you," holding a nice orange up in his hand, which quite won Gracie's heart. "I think I shall like him, mamma. Isn't he kind?" she whispered, and added, "He isn't very small—almost as large as I am."

Uncle John said, with his good-natured smile, as he kissed his niece: "Well, Sallie, how do you like the looks of the West?"

"Why, Uncle John, this is a dreadful place."

But Aunt Mattie put a stop to further words as she put her arms around her with the remark: "You have a fine boy, Sarah."

"Come here, Robbie, and kiss your Aunt Mattie."

Robbie couldn't hear. He and Gracie were getting acquainted.

She is telling him about Topsy and her little wagon and the fun they would have; he telling her that his mamma had lots of things for her in the trunk, and a great big doll.

Uncle John assisted them into the carriage and laugh-

GRACIE AND HER PETS

ingly said: "So you think this is a dreadful place, do you, Sallie? Well, you will change your mind when you get to Glenburnie Ranch."

"Yes, but, Uncle John, how did the railroad company come to put a station in such a place? The conductor let us off down by the stockyards and we had to walk in sand up to our shoe tops and sunflowers growing higher than our heads. I thought I had got to the jumping off place."

"Just so," laughed Uncle John, and explained to her that when the railroad was built that stations were built every twenty miles. It was a wild Indian country then, and none thought of the land being bought or settled up. Thus they talked till they got upon the rolling prairie, where they could see ranches for miles around.

Robbie was wild about the flowers, so Uncle John stopped Maude so the children could gather some. It was a joyful drive of three miles to them all, and when they alighted at Glenburnie front gate Sarah had her greatest surprise to see such a beautiful green lawn, such an abundance of flowers and young trees.

"And this is Glenburnie?" she said. "You never wrote to me that you had such a large house and such a lovely place. I did not know but what I should find you living in a two-room soddie. You wrote about ranches having houses built of sod, and I am anxious to see one."

"Now, Sallie, I can give you that pleasure right off. Just cast your eyes to the east of you and you will see a blooming one."

"You don't mean that big building growing out there? Why, how funny to see a house with grass and sunflowers growing on its roof. I must have a picture of that to take home with me for a specimen from Nebraska."

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"Yes, Sallie, that is our root house where we store our potatoes and vegetables to keep them from freezing."

Robbie and Gracie were out of the carriage like a flash, Gracie running ahead. "Come, Rob," she cried as she ran, "and see my dog and pony."

That first day was one long to be remembered by both children. Everything was new to Robbie, and he had to ask many questions about chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs and the stock on the place, and it was just as much fun for Gracie to show them to him and explain all about them. But she confided to good-natured Annie, the servant girl, that she thought Robbie was stylish and a nice-looking boy, but he was awfully green, and him from the town of St. Louis. But he was lots better to play with than Cropy, her pony, 'cause he could talk.

Two tired children went to bed that night and slept the sleep of the innocent.

The first thing in the morning when they had eaten a bite of breakfast they were to feed and harness Topsy and hitch her to the little wagon, but Robbie saw something else, and asked: "What's been digging there, Grace?"

"Gopher, Rob."

"Go for what, Grace, go for what?" exclaimed Robbie, looking around him.

Gracie laughed and tried to explain to him that it was a small animal that burrowed under the ground and had a pocket on each side of its head which it would fill with earth with its fore feet and bring to the surface. They were called pocket gophers. They burrowed under the ground in the front yard and destroyed the grass and often the vegetables in the garden. Her father had shot several of them.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

Robbie said: "My, I wish we had a live one. Wouldn't we make him dig?"

Well, they harnessed Topsy and hitched her to the little express wagon, Gracie being the other horse and Robbie the driver. He could ride in the wagon, if he chose, she said, but he would have to look out, as the horses might get tired hauling him and run away and dump him out.

So Robbie would only ride for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time, then he and Topsy would be horses and let Gracie ride. In this way they would play for hours at a time.

Gracie had a nice playhouse, her Uncle Frank, on one of his visits to the ranch, had built for her. She being the only child in the family, a great many things were made and bought for her so she would not get lonely playing.

Her pony, Topsy, and Beauty, the calf, were her only playmates.

Sometimes children would come and spend a day or two with her. Some were younger and some older than Gracie, and some were not good to the animals about the place, and that grieved her a great deal.

She had taught Topsy to work to her wagon, to shake hands and to lie down and wait till she was told to rise. She would slap Topsy a little in training her, but it almost broke her heart for anyone else to whip Topsy.

So her first instructions to Robbie were: "Pet Topsy and she will love you; whip her and I won't love you."

The playhouse was large enough for two to sit inside and have a doll bed, a little cupboard with dishes, a table and a little cook stove that never had any fire in it. They played that Robbie was the papa and Gracie the mamma,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

and would carry the dolls about with them, feed them and put them to sleep.

One day they thought they would have a change in their cooking; have something more than crackers, cake, cookies and such like. They would make some mud pies.

So they carried water and dug and carried more water till they had dough enough to make pies for a company of soldiers. They had their sleeves rolled up, but their skirts and shoes caught it. Oh! the fun they were having when Robbie's mamma, thinking it was time her little boy had his afternoon nap, called Robbie, but, getting no answer, looked and found them. But what was her amazement to see them, mud and water from head to heels. I am sorry to say Robbie got a hard scolding, was bathed and put to bed.

And his mother said: "Now, Robbie Zallee, listen to what I tell you. If you ever make mud pies with water again, I shall be obliged to whip you."

"All wite, mamma, I won't," said dear little Robbie in his lisping way. And he meant it all in good faith.

Gracie came in after Robbie did and said: "See, mamma, I got pretty muddy, too. I am sorry, but, you see, my apron isn't white and it won't matter. I will put on my bath dress and go to the irrigation ditch and take a good bath and be clean and dressed when Robbie wakes up." And away she ran to take her bath.

* * * * *

One day Uncle John was mending something at his work bench by the back yard fence, when Robbie came running to him with a piece of thick wire doubled up into a shelf-like shape.

"What have you got, Rob?" he asked. "Been making something, my man?"

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"Yeth, thir," said Robbie. "It's a watermelon carrier. Do you want to see how it works?"

"Yes, but don't try it on that melon in the yard, Rob; you might break it off."

It was a watermelon vine that had come up voluntarily, and on it was such a large, nice melon growing among the grass, we all felt an interest in it and enjoyed watching it grow. So Robbie did not try his melon carrier that day, only on melons in the milk house, where he showed Aunt Mattie how it worked as the melons slid off the carrier with a crash to the floor.

A few days after this Uncle John was again working at his bench. Robbie came up to the melon and called out: "I say, Uncle John, did you see how big the melon has growed?" He asked the same question several times, but Uncle John was too busy to pay any attention to him. He looked up when he heard Rob's voice at his side saying: "See, Uncle John, how big it has growed. Isn't it a nith one?"

"Where did you get the melon, Rob?" asked Uncle John, as he glanced over the fence.

"It's the one in the yard. Hasn't it got big?" answered Robbie, so pleased to surprise him.

"Why, Rob, didn't I tell you not to pull that one?"

"Yeth, thir, but I can take it wite back and pin it on again."

His innocence brought a smile to Uncle John's face, for the dear little fellow did not know anything about the laws of nature and her ways. He was really a bright boy and was always wanting to help.

The next day we had a hard rain and did a great deal of running here and there getting the little chickens,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

turkeys and ducks under shelter, and were sitting in the sitting-room watching the fine rain when Uncle John said: "I wonder if we got all the things in out of the rain."

Robbie was sitting on his lap looking out too. He looked up into his face with the most innocent look and said: "I tell you what you forgot—to bring in the wind-mill."

Gracie, Robbie and Topsy were in the habit of taking a walk every day. This day they went upon a hillside to gather some pretty stones. The hill was but a short distance from the house, and they were coming home with their laps full of stones when Gracie thought she would have some fun. She saw a large buzzard soaring away up over their heads. She cried: "Look up there, Rob. Oh, look at that coyote. Let's run. What if it should take after us and bite us."

Robbie looked up and saw the big thing flying above them and coming down towards them. He dropped the stones and ran with all his might to the house, almost crying and out of breath.

He ran to Aunt Mattie, who was sitting on the porch, and cried: "Oh, Aunt Mattie, a gwate big wabbit—no, a—a—a—what was it, Gracie?" But before Gracie could answer for laughing, he said: "Why, a quoyote took after us and Gracie said it might bite." The little fellow was greatly excited over it.

Gracie had come up slowly, but still laughing. Perhaps she thought she had done wrong to frighten Robbie so much.

Her mother looked a little severe at her as she said: "Come, tell me, Gracie, what has frightened Robbie. Did something really take after you?"

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"No, mamma; I was only in fun. It was a buzzard flying up in the sky and maybe coming down to the dead calf in the hills. I thought Rob would know a buzzard from a coyote. I didn't know he was so green."

"Well, my dear, when you saw he was so frightened, why did you not tell him you were in fun?" asked her mother as she looked at her repentant child.

"I did try to, but I couldn't for laughing to see him run from a buzzard in the sky." She emptied the pretty stones at her feet and went and sat down by herself, saying as she went: "I wouldn't live in St. Louis for anything. The people don't know anything."

Just then their little pet chickens came cheep, cheeping around the house and the children ran to catch them, soon forgetting all about the race.

Robbie called his chicken Muffie, because she was white and had feathers like whiskers around her face and a big topknot. Gracie called hers Quallie, because she was so pretty. They dressed them up in the doll clothes and I often wondered that the poor little creatures weren't killed by kindness.

Time was flying fast, but the children crowded a great deal of pleasure into each day, and when their mothers remonstrated against some things they did, Uncle John would always find an excuse for them and say: "Let the children have a good time now, they can only be children once." So he called to them one day: "Come here and get these things if you want some more pets," and what do you suppose they found? They said the sweetest little things they ever saw, two motherless pigs.

Great preparations had to be made for them. A big box first was found, then some nice clean soft hay for a bed, then a pan of milk, and the time they had teaching the poor hungry little pigs to eat.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

It wasn't long till they would follow the children, run after them and cry week, week, till given some milk, then they would snuggle down in the shade and go to sleep. Sometimes the children would carry them and at other times put them in a box and haul them around in the little wagon. Gracie would say to Robbie: "Don't you think them sweet little things, Rob?"

And he would answer, looking at them earnestly, "the tweetest I ever sthaw."

The love they gave those little dirty pigs! Still they would tire of pigs, dog and chickens and tire playing they were horses, where many times we could find them standing in a row by the big haystack. Cropy (the pony) Gracie, a saw horse with a piece of a cow's tail nailed on to it and rabbit ears. Then Robbie, Topsy and another saw horse. Gracie and Robbie making believe they were eating hay, stamping their feet and shaking their heads, trying to do as near like Cropy as possible.

Now they wanted something new; they ran to the house and Gracie asked her cousin Sarah to put a dark apron on Robbie so he could play without getting his white waist dirty, so he got the apron on and they were ready for work.

They went to digging as they had a new receipt for mud pie.

They had talked it over together; both wanted to make the pies. Gracie said if we only had milk that would be good and not like water. Then Robbie said, "I tell you what let's do, our girl makes pies out of water and eggs. I sthaw a whole nestful in the chicken house and a wooster on a nest laying more."

So to the chicken house they went and filled their laps

GRACIE AND HER PETS

with eggs, then proceeded to make their new kind of mud pies, but like many other new receipts it was a failure as far as cleanliness went.

Worse than water, they got the broken eggs on their hands, aprons and shoes; then the dust stuck to them. They were a pitiful looking sight, and they never realized that they had done wrong till Aunt Mattie called Gracie; then Robbie looked at himself and said, "What will mamma sthay?" Gracie tried to brush the dust of, when she found it stuck fast. She said: "Let's run and hide," and hide they did behind a chicken coop. Aunt Mattie getting no answer, Sarah said: "I wonder where they can be? I think I had better look for them." She held up her dainty white dress, and went out to where they had been making mud pies, then called, "Robbie! Oh, Robbie!"

"Yeth, mam, I am here," and out came the two naughty ones, looking very guilty. Sarah looked at first one, then at the other, and said: "Come to the house, both of you." Robbie began to cry: "I couldn't help it, mamma, it would stick to my dress."

When they came into the sitting-room where Aunt Mattie was, Sarah said: "Now look, Auntie, and tell me what to do with such a disobedient boy? You say to reason with him and not whip so often; you know I told him the other time he made mud pies, if he ever did the like again, play in the mud and water and get himself so dirty, that I would whip him." "But, mamma, we did not play with water, we made the pies with nice warm eggs, weel wooster eggs, for I sthaw him on a nest," said dear little Robbie.

The mothers could not repress a smile at Robbie's rooster eggs, but Aunt Mattie felt hurt that Gracie should do such a thing, as she thought she was old enough to know

GRACIE AND HER PETS

better, so asked: "Did not you know, Gracie, that it was wrong to waste the eggs? You know they are good food; you would think it strange and wicked to see me throw out in the dust good custard pie or pudding." "Yes, mamma, but we left lots of eggs in the nests." "Yes, my dear, that may be so, but always remember if you have more than you need yourself, use but not abuse what God has given you; there are always those in a neighborhood who need help, 'The poor ye have always with you,' so the dear Saviour said, and he expects us to bear one another's burdens."

"Now, children," continued Aunt Mattie, "I hope you understand that you did wrong to waste the eggs and to disobey your parents. If you are sorry for what you have done, come and kiss us and after you are washed and dressed you may play on the lawn, where it is clean and cool."

"Yeth, mam, I am sorry, for I might have taken those eggs home with me and given them to mamma's washwoman's little boy, he always looks so dirty and hungry," said Robbie as he looked down at his own dirty apron.

They were both ready for the kiss of forgiveness. When Sarah returned to the room she found Aunt Mattie in a deep study.

"Well, Auntie, do you think your reasoning has done any good?"

"Yes, I think it has given them something to think about. Had you ever noticed your washwoman's dirty little boy, Sarah? Rob said he looked hungry, too."

"Yes, he was a pale little fellow, just about Robbie's size, but much older."

"Had you ever thought that the time this poor woman

GRACIE AND HER PETS

was washing for you and others, she probably had neither time nor money to spend on her own boy?"

"Yes, Auntie, I remember asking her one cold day why her husband didn't help her more, so she would not need to go out washing, and go out in the cold when she was so thin and had such a bad cough. She looked at me with tears in her eyes and said: 'Bless your heart, mem, my Teddie was a good provider when well, but he has been a cripple for the last five years, and I have the care of him and my boy; and, if you believe me, mem, it's hard work keeping going and being cherrie like for his sake.' I can't forget her soft Irish voice as she spoke of Teddie, her husband. I gave her an old coat of mine and felt real sorry for her at the time, but there are so many poor people around that I didn't think any more about her. Her boy being about Robbie's size I might have given her all of his old clothes, and my clothes would just about fit her, and they are quite good, but I sell them to the rag man for very little, just to get rid of them. We have had so many good talks, Auntie, during my visit. I think when we get home I will try and be kinder and more thoughtful of others, and my washwoman and family will be the first I shall visit."

"Yes, dear Sarah, if you wish to be happy, forget self and try to make others happy."

I have very little more to tell about Robbie's Ranch Rambles.

The night before they were to leave, Gracie got a paste-board box, cut little windows in it, and put little Muffie in, to be ready to go with them in the morning, when his mamma looked at him and said, "I am sorry, dear, but I don't think it will be good for Muffie to have to live in a

GRACIE AND HER PETS

box so long, as we will visit in Omaha and in Kansas City for a few days."

Robbie could not help shedding a few tears, but he kissed his pets good-bye and said: "Take good care of my sweet little pig and Muffie till I come back again."

Gracie took care of Muffie till she grew to henhood and I may tell you a very funny story about her another time.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER IV.

WHITE MUFFIE AND HER KITTENS.

I TOLD you at the close of the story of Robbie's Ranch Rambles that I would tell you a funny story about white Muffie.

Robbie was on a visit with his mamma on a ranch away out on the western prairie in Nebraska, and while there had many pets and white Muffie was one of them.

When he kissed her good-bye and asked his cousin Gracie to take good care of her, he felt very sorry indeed that he could not take little Muffie to his city home with him.

Gracie did take good care of her and she grew to hen-hood, a little white beauty, with a muff of downy feathers about her face and a big white topknot; she looked as though she had on a hood with a big rosette on top.

One day in the following summer Gracie's mamma was walking out by the barn; she thought she would look in the mangers and see if she could find some eggs, as the hens would often steal their nests and hide under the feed boxes where the horses could not easily reach them. Her mamma looked and looked till she was one manger from the end.

Then she thought she would pull the hay from under the box, as she had often found eggs there. Suddenly her hand came in contact with something that made her jump. She bent over the manger and pulled away some more hay, when out flew a black hen right up in her face and

GRACIE AND HER PETS

cackled and looked back and cackled more, as much as to say: "My! how you scared me. But I am glad you let me out. If you will just leave my nest with my pretty white eggs."

The eggs were left, and in a few days she had company. The mamma continued to search, thought she would glance in the end manger. And what do you suppose she found?

Away in at the end, where there was plenty of room, she saw what she thought was the Tabbie cat and big white Tom sleeping quietly together, but on closer inspection turned out to be Tabby cat and white Muffie.

Tabby had either made her bed in Muffie's nest or Muffie had made her nest in Tabbie's bed. At any rate, they were snuggled close together asleep.

The mamma got into the manger and put her hand underneath Muffie. She kay and kayaaed, but did not try to fly off the nest.

Tabbie mewed and got up, stretched herself and rubbed against the mamma; Muffie would not move. She didn't want her to see how many eggs she was sitting on; but when counted, there were just eleven. The mamma said, when she told Gracie: "That is a good place for her; we will let her sit there."

Two or three days afterward Gracie and her mamma went out to see Muffie, to see that Maude, the carriage horse (for it was in her manger), hadn't pushed the hay on her in the night. No! She was all right, and there was Tabbie in the nest again.

"Oh! hark, mamma," exclaimed Gracie, all excitement. "Muffie must be hatching; just hear her cluck," and Gracie was in the manger in a moment.

Yes, she must be hatching; she is cluck, clucking away

GRACIE AND HER PETS

with her wings and feathers spread, and did not seem to like it when Gracie put her hand under her to feel for a chicken, and brought it out again, exclaiming: "Oh, mamma, what a big, funny chicken."

"Why, it's a kitten," and she brought out three more, gray and white ones.

Tabbie mewed and the kittens answered back, and when she raised up there were some of Muffie's eggs under her; had been crowded out from under Muffie to make room for the kittens.

"That will never do, Gracie; the eggs will never hatch that way. We will have to move Tabby and her kittens."

"Oh! no, mamma, please leave them together. Won't it be funny to have little kittens and chickens hatch out together?"

"Well, put the eggs back under Muffie and we will leave them for a day or two and see how they get along."

All went well for a few days, and it was funny to see Muffie with the little kittens peeping out from under her, or crawling around her. She would sit and close her eyes, as well contented as if they were her own little chickens. Tabbie would leave them and go out to hunt for something to eat, contented to think she had left a good nurse to take care of her babies.

Whatever happened to the happy family to cause them so much trouble, we never knew, but one day when Gracie and her mamma went out to feed Muffie, there were her eggs scattered about the manger, and neither Muffie, Tabbie nor the kittens to be seen anywhere. They looked outside the barn for Muffie, and called kitty, Tabby, inside the barn; then they heard a far-away mew; they followed the sound, and it came from the black hen's nest in the manger.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

"Be careful, Gracie, that the black hen doesn't fly up in your face like she did with me," said her mamma.

There wasn't so much hay under the feedbox, and when Gracie was in the manger she looked into the nest, and there was no black hen there. "Why, mamma, did you ever hear of the like? Here is Tabbie, her kittens, and, as sure as you live, Muffie, too."

There they all were, on the black hen's nest of eggs. Muffie's eggs cold, the black hen gone. The only thing to do was to leave them there. But whether Tabbie got tired of sitting on eggs or jealous of Muffie's love for the kittens, and their preference for Muffie's warm feathers, will never be known, but sure it is the next day they all moved back to the first nest. Muffie's eggs had been thrown out the day before by Gracie and she made another nice nest.

She came running to the house to tell her mamma and ask her what she should do with the black hen's eggs, as they were still warm.

It was interesting to watch the hen and kitten family. Muffie was put back on the eggs twice, but would slip quickly back on the nest with the kittens, clucking as if she was afraid something would happen to the kittens while she was away.

Then it was thought best to put the eggs in the nest where she would stay with the kittens. And the mamma said if it won't be all right for her to sit there, we will shut her up in a box and break her from sitting and not be bothered with her. But so long as the kittens were there she was pleased to sit on the eggs, and would turn them over and look at them to see if they were all right.

And then something else happened. Two little black chickens hatched, and they were too much for Tabbie.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

She would open her eyes and listen and look around her.

That day she finally moved her kittens to the back porch, where she found a bed for them on a piece of carpet in a corner.

Muffie only hatched the two chickens and Gracie moved them and her to the chicken house ; but the very next day she was back in the barn with them, and would go up to the manger and cluck as though she thought part of her family must still be there. She was left out at the barn, where she raised her little "nigger babies," and she so white and pretty.

I think she must have wondered whatever became of the other four, and why they looked and talked so different and were so cute when they put their little feet up on her face, when they mewed or played with her.

Who will say but what Muffie loved her kittens best?

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER V.

POOR PEEKABOO.

I AM going to tell you about a dear, little, sweet, cute, willful and disobedient pet and let you guess to which family she belonged.

One day when Gracie was coming home from school, riding old Cropy, she met a drove of quiet, nice animals, but for all their quiet, nice looks, Cropy got scared and didn't want to pass them. He was as much afraid of them as the old horses of to-day are afraid of the big automobiles.

Gracie was a good rider and made him stand his ground until they passed. One of the drovers came up to her laughingly and said: "You know how to handle a horse. Don't you want a nice pet? We are driving the mothers to the sandhills to pasture, and this little one is too young to follow such a long distance." For, like the good shepherd he was, he had carried it in his arms with her little head pillowed on his shoulders. Gracie reached out her hands and cried: "Oh, thank you; I have always wished for a pet." And from the way she caressed the kind little face, and called it pet names till she quieted it in her arms, you know, she loved her new pet. She rode up to the gate and called: "Oh, mamma, come quick and see what a sweet pet I have." Her mother asked: "What now?" She had so many of Gracie's "sweet pets" brought home from the fields, from sick kittens found on the road, coming from school, to a young quail, a

GRACIE AND HER PETS

young wild duck and baby rabbits by the wholesale, and even a lame sandhill crane, had all found homes and been kept either in the house or in the yard.

The mother was wise to help her little girl to love animals, and she remembered how fond she had been of pets when she was a little girl and had two like this one, a black one and a white one, so she took the flat, thin little thing in her arms and said: "Poor little motherless baby. You must be very kind to her. While you are putting Cropy away I shall fix a bottle for this baby so you can feed her when you come."

So her mother got a bottle with a big neck, stuck a goose quill through the cork, then wrapped the quill so it would not hurt the tender mouth and filled the bottle with warmed milk; then gave it to Gracie so she could have the pleasure of feeding it. At first "Baby"—that was what Gracie called it—would neither open her mouth nor suck when the nipple was put in, but with patience and perseverance she at last got some of the milk down the thin little throat, and then, after several trials, she enjoyed feeding her, with the bottle resting on her knees and the innocent eyes looking into her own and the long, thin tail beating time to the sucking. But, oh! how Baby cried for her own mamma, till Topsy, the dog, had pity on her, would lick the little face and showed in every way he was sorry for her and wanted to comfort her; so they became great chums.

Topsy remembered it had only been a few months since he had been taken away from his mother and given to Gracie, and it was nice to have someone to sleep with him in his nice little house and to play with him through the day. Baby was kept in the yard only when allowed to follow Gracie and Topsy for a little run out by the

GRACIE AND HER PETS

barn. The coyotes were too plentiful around the place at night for it to be safe to leave this kind of pet outside the yard. Topsy and Baby would play around the shrubs in the front yard, where the family were resting in the evening, just like two children, and that was when Baby was named. Gracie cried: "Oh, papa, mamma, look. Baby and Topsy are playing peekaboo," and so they were. When Topsy would look around the bush where Baby was hiding, she would look, stick out her head and say: "Ba-a-a!" then run after Topsy. Gracie ran to her and threw her arms about her neck and said: "You dear Peekaboo. You are just too cute for anything. I am going to name you Peekaboo." By this time she had grown as large as Topsy, and was so white and pretty, and full of mischief; seemed to enjoy dining on all kinds of flowers. The sweet peas climbing on the front fence she was careful never to let go to seed. The big snowball bush, she kept the leaves cropped off as high as she could reach, and at times nibble the bark off them. Gracie's papa said she was a nuisance. Gracie tried to teach Topsy to keep her away from the bush, and would sick Topsy on her.

Topsy would jump on her in a playful way, then Peekaboo would take after him and butt at him and run him all around the yard, and before long you would see the two together, Topsy lying down and Peekaboo either pawing him with her foot or else trying to chew his ears or tail. Topsy was old enough to learn to be useful, so when called to drive cows or hogs back to where they belonged, he would jump the wire fence and scamper after them. Peekaboo would run to the fence and would stand and bleat after him, and before long tried to go over with him; and if Peekaboo only had been contented

GRACIE AND HER PETS

to do what her best friends knew was for her good, to stay in the beautiful yard, where she was fed and loved by all. But no; this story would have had a different ending. She was like boys and girls of to-day, who think because their parents will not let them go to every show that comes to town, or run about at night, or keep them from bad company, who in time would destroy them. They, like Peekaboo, want their own way, and sometimes at a very great cost.

Peekaboo at last could jump the fence, and it was very funny to see her run with Topsy after the stock, and as she was always in the yard in the morning, Gracie began to think she was too smart and too large and pretty for anything to hurt her. One Sunday evening the whole family went to church. The church was in town, several miles from the ranch. Topsy was never allowed to leave the ranch, and when the family heard of the sad fate of Peekaboo, they could only surmise that the two had gotten lonely and that they would go in search of the family; but instead of coming home or staying in the churchyard and come home when the family did, Topsy went to the schoolhouse yard, where a lot of wicked dogs were accustomed to meet at night, where they made the night hideous with their howling and barking. Topsy seemed to have forgotten that his companion was not a dog, so how it happened was never known; only poor Peekaboo was found next morning, torn so badly that she died, and Gracie was at home looking everywhere and calling Peekaboo, and weeping for her dear pet lamb, who never returned. It makes me sad to write about a dear little pet coming to such a sad end after having such a careful bringing up and such a good home.

Then just think, boys and girls, how very, very sad it

GRACIE AND HER PETS

is for parents who love their children, train them up so carefully, with a love and devotion past finding out, then they, like Peekaboo and Topsy, stray away from home and get into bad company, and while they may not lose the life of the body, like poor Peekaboo, they learn bad habits that leave a smudge on their otherwise pure lives; for you are judged by the company you keep. Peekaboo was in bad company for only one night, but it cost her her life. And although Topsy lost his chum and playfellow by his disobedience, he did not profit by such a dear lesson, but ran away from home one night with bad company and feasted upon the flesh of some poisoned animal, put out to kill coyotes, and although Topsy was smart and a very useful dog, he had to pay the penalty with his life. He was just able to get home, where he tried hard to ask for something to relieve his suffering, but nothing could save him, and he died in great agony. He left a lonely little mistress to grieve over the loss of her friend Topsy.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER VI.

LITTLE TIDDLEDEWINKS.

WHEN Gracie's little pet bantam hen Quailie hatched, she carefully put the wee, wee chicks in a wee, wee bucket and carried Quailie under her arm like she had seen her mother do with the large hens and chickens. Quailie being a pet and so small, she was turned loose in the front yard with Jockie, the papa, where she would scratch among the flowers, and her family of five wee brown Leghorn banties and three Plymouth Rock chickens were very happy. One of the wee babies, the smallest of all, cheep, cheeped a great deal, never seeming to know what to do or where to go, while the others grew so large the little mother was raised completely off the ground when they went to sleep, but the wee one was so small Gracie feared she would die or be killed, for Quailie and wee Jockie felt the yard and the flowers belonged to them and would fight every hen, or even a turkey, who ventured inside of the yard, so she gave the wee one extra food and care and named her Tiddledewinks, as she always said she hopped around so lively. The Plymouths grew so fast they were larger than the little mother, and she thought her little family were old enough to do for themselves, so left them and went back to the chicken house. It was then Tiddledewinks showed her motherly tenderness for the first time. When her little brothers and sisters were crying at night for their mother, she just spread her small self. When they tucked their heads under her,

GRACIE AND HER PETS

she was pushed from one side of the coop to the other and lifted right off her feet, and when they were fed, she would call, "tick, tick," to them and try to be a mother to them. Gracie's papa made a nice coop for them in the back yard, where they lived to themselves, for the wee ones were all pets; but the Plymouths had to be sent to the chicken-house. This was in the spring. By fall she was a full-grown hen, but the smallest ever seen. The children all petted her and she was very fond of little chickens. She was often seen helping some mother brood her large family; with her little wings spread out, she would sit, half asleep, as happy as could be.

Late in the fall, when the ground was covered by the golden brown leaves, the goldenrod and fall daisies were beautiful along the roadsides and the chicken yard. Gracie came running in with a grape basket in her arms and cried: "Mamma, you can't guess what I found down on the ditch bank. Just look; six little black chickens. It's too awfully cold to leave them out. They would die. And I scared the mother clear away, so can't I have them for pets?" Her mother thought a moment. It was late fall, and she didn't want to bother with them, but asked how Gracie would keep them warm at night, now that she had taken them from their mother. "I can put cotton over them at night," said Gracie, in an absent-minded way. Then cried out: "I wonder what Tiddledewinks will think of them?" She rushed into the kitchen with her basket, set it on a chair, then she went out in the yard, where it was easy to find Tiddledewinks and bring her in. Then the mother watched while Gracie carefully put Tiddledewinks in the basket, and noticed the look of pleased interest that came into the little eyes when the little chickens began to crowd around her and stop

GRACIE AND HER PETS

their cheeping and poked their little heads under her. She sat in the basket, quite contented and happy, that afternoon and night.

In the morning, when she was put out of the basket on the kitchen floor, she began to cluck, cluck, to the chickens and to tick, tick, when she fed them, just like a hen who had sat on the eggs for three weeks and hatched the chickens. So she was put out in the coop, where she raised the six Plymouths, and it was a laughable sight to see and hear her clucking to her small family of big chickens, and the kind, motherly spirit she showed in spreading herself at night to try and keep them warm.

The next spring she laid and was set on six wee white eggs, and hatched out a family of her own. She always was a wonderful wee, active hen, but never so wonderful as when she went to clucking and raised a family without even having laid an egg or hatched a chicken. So that is the true story of Little Tiddledewinks.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER VII.

THEY LAUGH BEST WHO LAUGH LAST.

ONCE upon a time there lived a little old woman in a little old house. The house was thatched with long reeds, the latch of the door was on the inside and, like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood, when you knocked at the door, the little old woman would call out: "Pue the purren and come awain." Inside the house everything was neat and clean. There was a small fireplace, where she baked her oatmeal cakes and scones on a griddle on the peat fire, for she was very poor. She had neither wood nor coal to burn; only the dry peat taken from the peat holes and dried. There was what she called a swey, a crane of iron with a hook on it to hang her tea kettle on, or her kettle to boil her oatmeal porridge. As she hurriedly swept her hard clay floor, she talked to a big gray cat, who mewed as if he understood her, telling him she must go to Schooley Burn to wash to-day and he must take care of the house, for she had a big washing to do, and only one-half pound of soap to do it with, and no money to buy soap until the clothes were washed and returned to the owner. She lifted the clothes bag to her back, took her large wooden stoup in her hand and walked slowly down Schooley Brae to the burn, when she found her washtub and kettle, made her fire in between some stones, put the kettle on the fire and her tub on a large rock and laid her precious half pound of soap near by. She rubbed and she rubbed till her poor

GRACIE AND HER PETS

fingers were sore. She must save the soap so it would last through the washing. Poor in purse, but, oh, how rich in love, she rubs and sings "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

A large crow in a tree nearby watches her as she rubs, and he caws and he caws as if he, too, wanted to sing; watches her spread the spotless linen on the grass, where the beautiful pink and white daisies are peeping through the grass; then he sees something on the ground he thinks he wants, so he swoops down and gets it and then flies away to another tree with it. A sly old fox sees the crow has something in her mouth as she lights on the small tree near his den. He says, as he slyly slips up to the tree: "I must try some other scheme besides flattery this time to get her lunch. She won't soon forget how she dropped her beef when she tried to sing for me. Ha, ha! Good morning, Mrs. Crow; you are looking very well. I was afraid you would be grieving over your son Jack's misfortune. Oh, you smile. You don't believe it! Neither do I; but a neighbor said he heard your son Jack was caught stealing eggs."

Mother Crow's face twitched and he thought she was going to drop her cheese, but she said not a word. "And the same neighbor said," continued the fox, "your daughter Lilly, you think so white and beautiful, was about the blackest crow in the singing school. Ha, ha!" And the fox sat upon his hind legs, threw his head back and laughed loud and long. The little old woman came on the scene just in time to see the crow's lunch drop into the fox's mouth. It came with such force he rolled over backwards, almost strangled, and finally coughed the cheese up—no, the old woman's soap. The crow caw, caw, cawed, danced around in great glee, then flew down

GRACIE AND HER PETS

to the burn for a drink, for he had a bad taste in his mouth. The fox felt whipped, but he must have a drink, too; they came back to the spot where the soap was dropped to see what kind of cheese it was, for they were foaming at the mouth and coughing out mouthfuls of soap bubbles.

The little old woman had the laugh of her life, and as she picked up her precious soap—now in small pieces—she laughingly said: “Weel aday, weel aday. That was the best show, anyhow, I ever saw. They laugh best who laugh last.”

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLACK HEN'S STORY.

I AM very dark complected, but have golden feathers on my neck; not tall, but slender.

As they say in story books, I was poor but proud. There was a large family of us, and our food was not good, and very little of it. So when a man came to the house one day and wanted to buy hens, I was one of the dozen sold.

We arrived at our new home late in the evening, and I was delighted with the house we were shown into. It is a stone one, quite large. Everything was different from the home I had left. They were city folks, and seemed pleased with us. I tried to be very nice, as the lady fed us real well. After a while I thought I would like to raise a family. She set fifteen eggs under me, but was always bothering me, looking to see if I was all right. I got angry and picked her hard, but was sorry for it afterwards. She would come and feed me and smooth my head down. I tried to show I was sorry by hatching all my eggs. She was very much pleased, and praised my little ones. My joy did not last long. That cruel mistress took away all another mother's little ones—thirteen of them—and gave them to me. I was so confused and nervous with so many around me that I went to whipping them right and left. They looked so much like my own, they were all treated alike. I was just wild, and she saw she had made a mistake in not letting well enough alone.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

She was very cross to me, but concluded to give the other mother her chicks back again. We both were delighted, for I think when one does the best they can, that is all they can do. I was very cross for a long time; would pick every little chicken (not my own) within reach.

The mistress has a little girl that loves our little ones. She will come to feed us and will catch them, and how they do scream! I put my feathers up on end and fly at her, then we all laugh to see her run. She does not mind it long, for she will try, try again. I feel very happy now; my family are all well and growing nicely. We had a little wooden cottage when my family was young, but we are back to the old home again. We have a great many neighbors; most of them have as large families as I have, but their children are not so pretty as mine; some of them white and some yellow. But mine—most of them resemble myself.

I think if we will only have patience and hope for the best, and love one another, all will come right in the end.

GRACIE AND HER PETS

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHERRY.

ONCE upon a time, as they say in fairy tales, there lived in a beautiful stone mansion, centuries ago, an elderly lady and her granddaughter. At the death of her only daughter, some five years before, she had discharged all of her servants, only retaining her cook, housekeeper and gardener. Society knew her no more; she lived the life of a recluse. Her only pleasure in life was in the company and training of her granddaughter, on whom she lavished her wealth of both love and riches. By some she was called "the good fairy," because of her good deeds and sunny smiles; by others, to whom she had been equally kind, "the old witch," because of her marvelous power she at times displayed. Some there were who called them miracles, but she was known far and near as "Dame Margaret," and by this name we shall know her, and go with her for a short time in her daily walks of life. This beautiful summer morning we see Dame Margaret and granddaughter Margaret descending the broad stone steps of the mansion. They pause to look around, and for Dame Margaret to adjust the fine embroidered white fichu daintily worn about the little miss' shoulders. She is dressed in white. We of to-day who see the little girls of her age dressed with her little dress skirts so short that at the first glance we see only a long waist with sleeves and black or white stockings attached, we would think little Margaret's dress

GRACIE AND HER PETS

too long, for we can just see her dainty high-heeled white satin slippers peeping from beneath the full white skirt. The grandmother—how can I describe her? When you look on her face, you forget her dress, although it is of such rich material, made like the granddaughter's, and the same high-heeled slippers worn, only in black satin. Her face, although marked with lines of sorrow, and her eyes are dim with shedding many tears, is not the face of "an old witch," but of one with the sunshine of love in her heart. Little Margaret has a small basket on her arm, filled with wheat and pieces of bread.

We watch them walk hand in hand down the smooth gravel walks, bordered on either side with boxwood and flowering shrubs. We see them step through a small opening and come into an orchard, and see more large shrubs in bloom, also beautiful driveways, now seldom used. But what are they doing? Calling the wild birds to them. "Come, Turtledove; come, King Oriole, brown thrush; come, blackbird; come, dear little quailies," and there they come, the little mothers flying down from their nests, some in fruit trees and others in shrubs. Little Margaret glides to a turtledove's nest, she can easily see into, and then she sees two little white eggs; then runs to a beautiful tree nearby laden with fragrant white blossoms. Then she calls: "Dear, dear grandmother, please lift me up that I may see again our dear little orioles." The grandmother lifts with ease the light little form, and when she has peeped into the prettily woven nest and seen the four little yellow, downy ones, her grandmother exclaims: "See, darling, how beautiful our King Oriole looks with the sun shining on his bright plumage like gold, and listen to his song of gladness as he stands guard over his little ones. And there comes

GRACIE AND HER PETS

the little mother back to her nest. Now we will gather fruit and flowers to send to the sick in our village."

The following afternoon, while they are seated beneath a wide-spreading beech tree, they are startled by hearing boys' voices in the shrubbery. Dame Margaret brushed her hand thoughtfully over her soft white hair, settled her fine lace cap on her head, and said: "The gardener has gone into the city. Tarry here while I go see. I fear harm might befall our birds." She had only been gone a short distance when she heard a boyish voice say: "You catch the bird and I'll take the eggs." She hastened her footsteps, but too late. She heard her pet, the oriole, singing so loudly and so shrilly, as if to warn the other birds; then a shot. She thought the oriole safe, for he was still singing with a sweet, plaintive voice; but his loud, shrill voice had brought the other birds to his rescue.

Dame Margaret stood in astonishment at the picture presented to her view. King Oriole was perched high in the beautiful blanco tree, where he had sat so often to sing to the little mother on her nest near him, and beside him stood a blackbird, a distant relative, with wings outspread, and just below him, with head raised and gazing at the oriole in wonder, was a woodpecker. On a tree nearby were perched several doves, and a brown thrush, another distant relative; even several quail stood in a group looking at the oriole, who was still singing, but in a weak tone of voice. The birds seemed to understand the language of the oriole's song, for a turtledove's voice broke the spell with a cry that had never been heard before, a mournful cry of "Oodear, oo, oo." Then a quail piped up: "Keep quiet."

Then Mother Oriole left her nest. She saw that some-

GRACIE AND HER PETS

thing was wrong with her mate, and when she saw his life's blood dyeing the beautiful white blossoms all around him, she gave a piercing cry; but all he could say was: "Be cheery, be cheery," and swayed as if to fall, when the blackbird, with wings outspread, was ready to bear him to the ground, and received a spot of blood on either wing. The woodpecker had blood upon his head. What did it matter? They were proud to be called the friends of the oriole. Dame Margaret picked up the dead bird, and as she smoothed his gay plumage, she murmured: "The ingratitude of mankind, to destroy the gifts of God, sent to brighten and cheer the lives of God's creatures in this world. Surely, my King Oriole, your mission in this beautiful tree, like some lives, bears blossoms, but no world has not been in vain. It must bear fruit. This fruit; henceforth it shall bear and be fruitful, and the fruit shall be food for the birds when I am gone, and wherever his blood has touched it shall remain, in memory of his cheerful, helpful life." The doves were still mourning, and as she passed by their nest she saw the boys had robbed it of two white eggs; two families brought to grief, for a few moments' pleasure of two thoughtless boys.

Dame Margaret and granddaughter Margaret took their walk each morning to feed the birds and to watch the growth of the little orioles, but before they were old enough to leave their home a wonderful change had taken place in the tree that sheltered the nest. Where the white blossoms had been, there were little green fruit; and how the birds, as well as Dame Margaret and the little Miss, watched the change of color as day by day the green fruit changed from light cream to pink. When the mother and little orioles returned to bid farewell to their

GRACIE AND HER PETS

home, they saw the fruit as red as the blood of their father, King Oriole. They tasted and found it so good to eat they held a farewell feast with all the neighbor birds. Dame Margaret found the wonderful tree almost bare of fruit and saw the ground red with the juice and seeds. She said: "This looks so much like blood, I shall cover these seeds up. But what shall we name this wonderful fruit, granddaughter?" Margaret thought a moment, then said: "You said Oriole's last words were 'Be cheery, be cheery.' Name it 'Be cheery.' It shall be cheery." And so ever after they called the tree Cheery, and when she had covered up the seeds, many young trees sprang up and were to supply the future generations with cherries. But they missed the song of the orioles, for after the death of King Oriole, the other male orioles seemed to lose their musical talent, and their plumage began to lose its gay colors and to assume the humble hue of that of the females, all in memory of King Oriole.

We will take a leap over time and space and land in front of another large home (country home), surrounded by a large grove and many blooming shrubs. Times and customs have changed, and as we take a look at the two coming through the front gate, we would have a very imaginary imagination to believe they were the descendants of Dame Margaret and granddaughter Margaret; but such they are, even to the names, for this is grandmother Margaret and granddaughter Margaret out on a morning's ramble. Dressed in white satin slippers? you ask. Oh, no; grandmother has on a neat calico shirtwaist suit and good, low-heeled shoes, and if she has a happy, smiling face, it is buried in the shade of a sunbonnet, and we will have to judge her by her work and words.

Granddaughter is dressed very much like her grand-

GRACIE AND HER PETS

mother, and as she takes her grandmother by the hand she asks: "Are we doin' to take a 'ittle spin srue the orchard?" and added: "'Ets do," coaxingly, "and 'ook for some birdies' nests." Grandmother carries a small tin bucket in her hand, but it is empty, for she is on a prospecting tour. She may find some kind of fruit to fill it before she returns. By this time they are strolling through the plum and cherry orchard, and she was brought back to earth by little Margaret crying gleefully: "Oh, grandmother, 'ook at that booful bird," and there was a beautiful oriole perched in the top of a cherry tree, singing, in a pleasant, jingling medley of short, variable notes, confused, rapid and continuous, and in a nest lower down in the tree the mother flew off and there were four little yellow, downy birds, with the clusters of cherries all about them a lovely pink.

Then, in the next tree, off flew a turtledove and fluttered and crippled along on the ground and drew a cry of pity from little Margaret, until grandmother comforted her by telling her the bird was trying to decoy them away from her nest and was just making believe she was lame; but the two nests brought back to her mind the family legend of the cheery, or, as we call it now, cherry, and she entertained Margaret on the rest of their ramble with the story of the origin of the cherry, and why some of the blackbirds had red on their wings and the woodpecker had a red head. It was the blood of King Oriole that remained. And why the dove is called the mourning dove, and why the oriole changes his plumage and loses his musical talent at the time of the year that King Oriole died. It is in memory of his death.

